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CAMPUS TRAILS AND TRIALS OF FIFTY YEARS AGO

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One of the satisfactions of surviving half a century of anything, no matter what, is that you are accorded license to reminisce. Fifty years ago, come September, I rolled into Ann Arbor as a freshman, on an interurban trolley line which has since disappeared like all of its kind. Shows what can happen to an apparently solid institution in the life of one frail mortal. Having done some newspaper work before arriving, I was not as green as some of my classmates, and I sized the town up without a tremor.

The chief difference between Pontiac and Ann Arbor was that Pontiac was one town, Ann Arbor two - uptown and downtown, East Side and West Side, town and gown, as upper crust collegians said. I had to live close to downtown as that was where the printing plants and telegraph offices were. Main Street seemed a long way from the campus. Going from campus to Joe Parker's for beer was in the nature of an expedition, not just a stroll. Downtown was a place where different customs prevailed. There merchants expected cash for wares or else substantial credit information; while State Street merchants would trust any student for anything. Except freshmen, that is. But if an upperclassman said a good word for a freshman, that would be OK too. Downtown the merchants were cagier, more cautious. Business went on there pretty much as if the University did not exist. That may be pressing the point too hard; but it is a fact that then it was not common to find University graduates engaged in business downtown; now the offices there are full of them.

Thoreau wrote that he had travelled extensively in Concord. Well, I did likewise in Ann Arbor, for walking was my favorite sport; spent most of every Sunday walking to Saline, Whitmore, Pittsfield Junction (the place that never grew up), just walking anywhere. The further west you travelled in Ann Arbor the more German the town became. A friend of mine from Jackson, who came from a German family there and spoke German as a household language, had some family connections on the Ann Arbor West Side, so he knew his way around in that foreign country. Once in a while he would take a few of us to a little beer garden where the steins were immense and English was rarely heard. It was just a quiet, bowered haven in a backyard of an

ordinary looking residence on a side street. Indoors, there was room for only a dozen; in fine weather the customers, mostly family parties, sat outside and harmonized. Students were not wanted, just tolerated, as long as we behaved ourselves. Mind you, this was no speakeasy; it had a legal license, just a quaint way of doing an honest business in an off corner.

I have mentioned Joe Parker's, which lives in song and story. Its big round tables carved with student names now decorate the Union cafeteria. Joe was a type I had become well acquainted with as a newspaper reporter in Pontiac - the solid, substantial saloonkeeper as public man who dominated politics and tried to keep his business respectable but profitable. Prohibition destroyed men of that type - they didn't know how to go underground and run speakeasies. The Orient, coupled with Joe's in the old song, had more spit and polish; also less trade. But the downtown beer emporium most to my liking was a quieter place than these famous places - Haas and Heibein's. Those wonderful Teutonic syllables have never been embalmed in college song as far as I know, perhaps because Haas and Heibein never went in for college atmosphere on their ground floor ordinary premises. Upstairs they had a room you could hire for special celebrations and there the raucous rah-rah was sometimes lifted; but downstairs in the bar you were supposed to make no more noise than the substantial business man who dropped in for a quencher, or double-decker corned beef sandwich on rye for a nickel, pickles and beans for free on a side counter and help yourself. On the side street Haas and Heibein had a family entrance separated from the bar by a curtain. Having no family at the time, I never used the family entrance, but I assure you the family room was most respectable, frequented mostly by German farmers and their wives and children on marketing day. No woman ever was seen in any barroom. That dire commonplace of today entered the social scene with prohibition.

That I should have become immersed in this liquid phase of my subject so early astonishes me; but while on it let me say that one of the remarkable changes one observes today, as compared with fifty years ago, is the selling of alcoholic beverages of all kinds in drug stores near the Campus. When I was a student here, nothing of the sort could be bought either in the glass or in any bottle or container, nearer than Main Street.

There had been, I understand, many examples of hostility between town and college youth in old Ann Arbor, and there still existed west of Main Street some suspicion of higher education, so that one never felt quite at ease rambling alone around in that part of town, especially at night. I participated in only one fracas on the West Side, when an audience of students rioted in Old Germania Hall. Word went around by grapevine one night in the boarding houses and frats that Germania Hall was to be the scene that very night of a really hot burlesque show "for men only." Whoever started the rumor had an eye for business, for students packed the place at 25c a head. Whatever the management intended to exhibit, the police chief was present and the show, perhaps because of his censorship, bitterly disappointed the audience. So when the manager came to the footlights to announce that a concert of a most intriguing sort would be held after the show, for which additional entertainment another dime would be

charged, we devotees of higher education were outraged. Our boldest then charged stageward, but were met there by a thin, brave line of actors and stagehands. One of the performers attired as a gorilla, swinging a chair expertly, led in beating off the attack. While the battle raged at the footlights and in the wings, all the chairs in the auditorium were stacked in the center of the auditorium until they almost reached the roof. What began as a lark was becoming a frenzy of destruction. A call went out for the sheriff, who rallied deputies to surround the hall. As the word spread there was a rush for stairs and windows. Hundreds escaped; a dozen or so were arrested. So you really couldn't blame the quiet home folk of the West Side or the owners of Germania Hall for disliking college students. The next day it was rumored that various fraternities had kidnapped some of the burlesque queens; but that turned out to be just plain brag.

I have read of tremendous fights between circus roustabouts and college students; but by 1903 that point had been passed. Indeed, our students have become more decorous through the years. Modern panty raids seem to be not so much rowdy physical roughhousing, as something silkier and sexier, for which an old-fashioned burlesque show might be an antidote. We had desperate college "rushes" between freshmen and sophomores, in which some were injured to the point of being hospitalized. The center of the excitement was usually the campus flagpole to be seized and climbed by one class, and defended by its rival. To avoid these casualties the tug-of-war through the Huron River was invented; then the river was dammed and deepened to the point where that became dangerous.

Part of the autumnal madness incident to enforcing freshman caps on unwilling first-year men was a wild mania for hair-cutting, or to be more exact, hair-gouging, for the event was usually too tumultuous for precise work. Naturally there were injuries, suspensions and expulsions. One day the Daily, on which I was then News Editor, recorded the melancholy death of a student who had been expelled in this connection, the younger brother of Neil Snow, captain of the football team and the most popular Michigan athlete of his time. Soon after expulsion young Snow went into railroad work and was run down in a switchyard. Haircutting withered away gradually as a college sport after that.

My years here - 1903 to 1907 - saw an earnest effort to establish college traditions and organizations, some of which stuck. The Freshman Cap was one such, student government, the Union, and Sphinx of which I was a charter member, were others. In my sophomore year a student County Fair raised more than $4,000 for a Michigan Union, and in my junior year a Union minstral show, of which I was general chairman, raised nearly $2,000. This was seed money for organization and propoganda, as not a brick had yet been laid on the mighty structure which has since become the social center of University life.

Students, by the large, seem more adult than they used to be, not as bashful. They are older in years, on the average, and more is expected of them. Among them are many married students and these, by example, seem to steady the others. Then, too, it's a different age, more disillusioned, less satisfied with itself. The mere

expense of living makes one thoughtful. In my day a student who had $30 a month for room, board, and laundry, could live comfortably, with board at $2.00 to $2.50 a week and beefsteak for breakfast. I recall one boardinghouse keeper who used to promise us beefsteak and eggs, both, for breakfast if we would promise to go to church afterward.

I am reminded to say something of Ann Arbor landladies, for the landlady is a vanishing type worthy of being remembered if not exalted. It is true that her monopoly has been diminished by the increase of dormitories and the multiplication of fraternities and sororities; but I think a thorough-going survey would reveal that the breed is not entirely extinct, and that a good many rather lively specimens still prevail. I know one hardy perennial who, at age 82, has fought the good fight against youth for forty years without ever giving quarter. Another, aged 75, with 16 roomers in her house boasts that she has made a fortune, has no heirs, and does not know what on earth to do with her money. When I suggested that she might begin by giving free rent to some of her impecunious lodgers and occasionally inviting them all to a free meal, the good woman was positively aghast. Her conscience simply couldn't endure the thought; such a thing had never been done. Still, we all know cases where some landladies were as guardian angels to their flocks. The Luicks, with whom I roomed on Liberty Street, often provided us with those precious little German "kuchen" among many other kindly and thoughtful acts. Come to think of it, young people can be trying. I find them so myself, in spite of my 16 grandchildren.

You may wonder at the word "trails" in the title of this paper. Campus Trails they literally were fifty years ago, just paths worn deep on convenient routes where the Regents had neglected to provide cement sidewalks. Those were the cool, old days when snow descended nearly every winter's evening and melted a little the next day, so that slush abounded in those sunken pathways. Wet feet form one of my basic subconscious memories of the old town. One editorial we frequently rewrote at the Daily demanded better sidewalks on Campus. Now there is a sidewalk anywhere you turn; the only trouble with them is they are too crowded. You just can't please an old grad.

Now I have reached the Campus at long last. That was about all there was to this University when I matriculated in 1903. Off the original, beloved 40-acre quadrangle plot there were only a few college buildings - notably the Observatory and the Medical Hospital off on the valley's edge. Our new buildings were Tappan Hall, the two Gymnasia, and the /West/ Medical Building. The Engineering Arch was on the way. Ferry Field had a fast track but only a wooden grandstand, with no press box for us budding journalists or the correspondents of out-of-town newspapers. I recall the crashing of temporary bleachers; also the sad day when a Yost U. of M. eleven lost its first football game; likewise the day of wrath when one Lightbody of Chicago not only outran our best men in the quarter-mile and half-mile, but with muckerly satire loafed in the stretch and beckoned our panting gladiators on. My part in athletics was strictly rhetorical, and I wrote up some big games in a snappy style that would now seem reserved and chaste.

Here are a few personal recollections. The first official a freshman encountered was naturally dear old Dupey, Professor DuPont, head of the French Department, who did double duty as Registrar. He never forgot a student's face, name, or relations. A brother and sister had preceded me here, and when he saw my name on the card he recalled both of them with a warmth which made me forget that I was a lonesome maverick. "You come of a genteel Meetchigan University family," he said. "Voila! Do well, for the family name." But when I presumed upon this beginning to suggest that I might take French I, he shook his head. "From Pawntiack it is hopeless. That dear lady who teaches the French there, she has never bothered to go to the intellectual capital of the world, Paree. So she has no accent; so whoever comes from Pawntiack has no accent either. Ze French land-guage it is a beautiful landguage, it has such beautiful sounds, for instance -- anh, oonh, uench. You try the German instead of the French, ne c'est pas?"

My friend Esson Gale, now Director of the International Center, and considerably more rotund and dignified than of old, was the first acquaintance I made in Ann Arbor, when I was seated next to him in Freshman Latin class. Esson recently told me a Dupey story, a tale which seems to compress in two words a deal of scholarship and philosophy. Gale went to the Registrar with a request that he be allowed to take more subjects; doing 17 hours a week seemed too little, he wasn't busy enough. Dupey looked sharply at the over-ambitious youth and snapped at him two golden words. "Dig deeper." Just that; nothing more. "Dig deeper." All the wisdom of the law and the prophets are in those words of sage advice to youth. "Dig deeper."

Then there was our bulky and grizzled Dean, Richard Hudson, one of the earliest graduates of my own High School. He was sometimes called "Pink-whiskered Dick," but his short facial coverall was really what George Bernard Shaw called "a washed-out sandy." Those were the days when any graduate of an accredited Michigan high school must be admitted to the Department of Literature, Science and the Arts without examination. As a result of low preparatory school standards, we Lits had our share of scrub students, yet I cannot recall a single one of us being dismissed for academic failure. Huddy, a railroad fireman in his youth, was aware that Michigan was still intellectually a lumberjack state, and that if he sent any of us packing for scholastic reasons the next comer probably would be worse than the last. Also, the University needed all possible friends throughout the State. So he shifted our dullards around into snap courses, such as History of Art, Music Appreciation, and the like.

It wouldn't be quite fair to say that Dean Hudson's standby course in Modern European History was a snap course; but it seemed so to me for our home had a big library loaded to the eaves with books on English and French history. In class the good, gray Dean would sit at his desk, peer near-sightedly at his carded notes, and lecture in a rather faint, flat voice oddly at variance with his bulk. As his lectures in this course were the same year after year, many alumni will recall this remarkable description of Prussia. "At this time," said Professor Hudson, "the Kingdom of Prussia

resembled a dumbbell, except that one end was larger than the other and there was no connecting link." The Kingdom of Prussia has long since vanished from the map, but Huddy's inspired description of it has acquired some measure of deserved immortality.

Dean Hudson stressed attendance at class more highly than he did concentration therein. His course in European History was in high favor with our better and heavier athletes, who could slumber lightly on the back benches while the Professor, never lifting his eyes, droned along on the turmoils of Europe. To him the complications which led up to the Franco-Prussian war provided the key to understanding Europe, particularly the intrigues with which Bismark maneuvered France and Napoleon into declaring war on Germany in 1890. Anyone who grasped even casually the significance of the famous telegram sent to William I of Germany was certain of a passing grade. Therefore, in describing that scene, Huddy's voice would rise a little as he declaimed:

"And when the Emporer received the telegram, what did he do, what did he do, what did he do?" Most of his classes received this challenge mildly and left Huddy to simmer in his own emotion; but in one session from the rear of the room boomed a deep voice saying: "He read it - he read it - he read it!"

Intent upon his notes and in the grip of his own emotional feeling for that particular crisis in history, Huddy seemed not quite to comprehend the interruption. Something had happened to mar his great moment as the interpreter of the classic duel in statecraft between the two Emporers. Nevertheless, these muddled youths before him must be taught the eternal truths, so he repeated:

"And when the Emporer received this telegram, what did he do, what did he do, what did he do?" Again came the voice from the depths: "He read it, he read it, he read it." At that the whole class gargled with mirth and the gargantuan squirming of our heroes on the back benches broke down one bench, precipitating several tons of bone and muscle to the floor.

Huddy lifted his grizzled head and gazed upon this scene with mild perplexity. If he realized just what had happened he gave no sign, and such was his serene separation from practical affairs that he may have reckoned all this stir was in the nature of applause and approbation for his dramatic description of the Emporer striding up and down the station platform at Ems while awaiting the fateful telegram. Still, a bench had been broken!

After a single sentence of admonition he went back to his lecture but that sentence had a bite in it: "There are fools," he said, "in every class on this campus, but some hide it better than others. As I was just remarking, the Emporer read the telegram."

There was a time when I needed a deep draught of human kindness, which Huddy supplied. My father died during my Sophomore year. After the funeral I had no clear idea of my future; my will was paralized, I could not decide whether to return here or not so I missed several

weeks of college work and, of course, had to explain my absence to the Dean, who was known to take attendance seriously. However gently he judged stupidity, he expected every man to do his duty by going to classes. Haltingly, I told him my troubles.

"Why, of course," he said, in that quick, little voice of his, "you are reinstated without prejudice...Suddenly, too - dear, dear, a pity. Well, you're back. I'm glad you're back. Get to work now; take hold hard, catch up with the others. And just think of all of us here as your friends." Huddy was always bigger than any desk he sat behind; physically that was true, because desks were smaller then; but it was also true in calm spiritual scholarship.

I have mentioned Huddy's beard, short and grizzled, but really it was nothing much compared to others on the Campus. A powerful Ph.D. thesis might have been written on the Hirsute Adornments of Educators, or the Influence of Facial Hair upon Higher Education. Of the top professors only the handsome and well-beloved Claude Van Tyne do I remember as being forever and altogether clean-shaven. The others displayed all manner of whiskers, beards, mustachios, burnsides, dundrearies, and other fringe benefits to the physiognomy. If you can bear it, look over the faculty photographs in Hinsdale's History of the University and marvel at the vanity of sages. One of the most remarkable whiskerandos of all time was that affected by President Angell in his old age. What he wore in his prime I know not, for I never saw him except as a venerable. However, on one occasion I did see that benign old gentleman so perturbed that the hairy fringe he wore, which extended from ear to ear but ducked from his chin to traverse his Adam's apple, bob tumultuously up and down. This was when he called me into his office for a personal reprimand because of an editorial I wrote for the Michigan Daily. It seems that I had insulted the Honorable Board of Regents by suggesting that a quorum thereof should return from their winter vacations in Florida and California in order to attend to a pressing order of business on necessary improvements long delayed. I listened respectfully until he said that I richly deserved dismissal and if he had been able to find in my academic standings, a report on which he held in his hand, any reason for dropping me from the University rolls, I should be ousted forthwith. Since no conditions appeared on the record, I would be permitted to apologize to the Regents in print. At this point I ventured to reply that, having done newspaper work before coming to college, I could profitably depart any time I was not wanted on the Campus; in fact I was then being solicited by a former alumnus to quit and join up with the Cleveland Press, a haven for many Michigan journalists of whom the University was proud,- downright proud.

At this the dear old man, who had been a journalist himself in his youth, took quite another tack. No, no; I must finish my course, get a degree. But did I - hm, hm, hm - need to do so much outside work, writing for the Daily and those Detroit and Toledo newspapers? If I stuck closer to my books,- who could tell? - I might do better work and even be a scholar some day. I replied that it was that or nothing; I was working my way through college the best I could. Then Prexy came perilously close to bribery. There were funds, he explained, revolving funds set up by benevolent alumni, from which he could loan to promising students enough to see them through, on their

promise to repay after graduation. I thanked him, said I would consider the situation, and talked it over with Professor Van Tyne. Van advised me to do nothing whatever. "The chances are that tomorrow Prexy will have forgotten all about it. As for the Regents, they never read your rag of a Daily."

So there was no apology, no loan, and no great scholar named Pound to talk to you tonight. Oh, yes, enough Regents did soon return from the palms to our snowy campus to whatever the Daily thought should be done,- I've forgotten what.

From these tales you will sense that ours was a conservative Campus in those days. In our undergraduate days we revelled in quaint humble characters occupying scenes which have gone forever. Fashionable restaurants now occupy the sites of Tut's and Ted Jolly's. All that remains of Tut's is an imperishable story of Young Tut, the fat boy waiter, who on being admonished to take his thumb out of a patron's soup replied, "Why, 'taint hot." That story has gone round the world.

Ted Jolly, proprietor of the lunch counter at the corner of State and Liberty, was a lean, saturnine philanthropist who sold coffee and toast for five cents when first I struck town. Three slices of golden brown toast well buttered and a cup of coffee, all for a nickel. He used a special sort of bread which is seen no more of man, baked for him by a German housewife - sort of a half roll, half loaf, that came to the counter in long narrow slices. Ted had two pet hates - unknown freshmen and young faculty members; when he could identify those wretches he doubled his price and walked out into the kitchen for air. But if a freshman brought him a good word from a recent alumnus in good standing, as I had the good fortune to do, then in Ted's eyes the newcomer was advanced a peg or two. On leaving Pontiac a young U. of M. lawyer had given me a message to Jolly: "Tell Ted you're a friend of mine and he'll be a friend of yours." And that's the way it was right through; Ted was always good for a loan and no questions asked. We figured out the reason Ted didn't like young faculty members was that they had participated in the academic downfall which released him from study to undertake the care and feeding of students.

In the days of our youth the most glamorous of community figures everywhere in America were the veterans of the Civil War, the old G.A.R.'s, who generally wore wide black slouch hats and, on formal occasions, faded blue uniforms. Now the nation over, North and South, all are gone but a hardy half dozen or so. One of the most colorful of them was proprietor in his later years of the weekly Times, Major R. L. Warren, for whom I rustled up a college column and did other writing chores for the five dollars a week and complimentary tickets to "shows," as we called the slapdash silent films in their puny infancy. Major Warren had a famous son, Charles B. Warren, Detroit lawyer, and the Army's chief legal luminary during World WarI. Later he just missed being in President Harding's cabinet - the Senate would not confirm. In 1917, as a very small cog in the war machine, Navy branch, I had occasion to call on Advocate General Warren in his Washington office. The information I wanted for Naval communications was a little off the line, the General was busy that morning, I would have to wait or come back later. I said, "All right, sire, I'll

wait all day. But in the meantime as a former college reporter for the Ann Arbor Times I would like to interview you concerning the life and times of its former editor and publisher, Major R. L. Warren, whom you may recall as your Paterfamilias."

General Warren turned around with a rousing laugh. "So you worked for the old gentleman. Sit right down and we'll get you what you want. Tell me, what war story of his did you like best?"

"The one where he rasstled General Sherman in the dark at Vicksburg, each going to inspect sentries and each thinking he had hold of an enemy spy. The Major was just getting a nice hammerlock, when he felt a heavy epaulet and hollered 'Help, boys, I've captured a Reb general.'"

"That must have been one of his later creations. I never heard it before. My favorite concerned the time he captured a courthouse, ascended the bench of justice, had the jail emptied, the prisoners brought in, paroled them in his own custody, and inscribed his judgement on the Court records as follows, "In the name of the Great Jehovah and the Federal Union, free and independent by the Grace of God and the First Brigade, First Division, 9th Corps, United States Army." Major Warren, you see, had studied law before he took to journalism. While I worked on the Times he was commander of Welch Post, No. 137, Grand Army of the Republic.

The old days, even those of conflict, seem beautifully simple as compared with these through which we wallow from one crisis to another. In my youth there was plenty of room for fighting Indians out West, and it never occurred to us to look overseas for enemies. We defeated Spain in 1898 without benefit of automobiles, income tax, foreign alliances, or the military draft, and never even considered going to Europe to do it. The fact that other peoples were not as well fed or as well governed as Americans didn't bother us in the least; we thought they just grew up poor and benighted and did not feel called upon to uplift them in any manner more expensive than sending them a few missionaries and old clothes and medical supplies. The horrors of the War Between the States had grown dim, the new horrors of large-scale war had not yet been imagined. We Americans knew we were fortunate and rich, but how rich nobody knew. I studied economics in college under a severe taskmaster, Freddy Taylor, yet he never once gave us a figure on the national income or showed any interest in that kind of guesswork; and there weren't any statistics on the subject. By and large, there was enough income to go around; if anyone needed more, let him get busy and hustle. Opportunity, all agreed, knocked at every door; but the wolf came along to the same door if you did not hear Opportunity in time. Democracy was being lived then so fully that it was seldom mentioned; peace was normal and so not debatable. It seems that man begins to chatter about his blessinge only when they are being lost.

All in all, I'm glad I was young enough to sign up as a freshman at this now massive and wonderful University while it was small and stodgy in the year 1903, before education became organized and regimented, before the United States became a great power, before the draft came in to confound youthful ambition, and before science had

taken the atom apart in order to explode matter and nations. These modern proceedings are infinitely more precise and superior to any we endured; but the human spirit seems to revel in joyfree carelessness and a becoming humility sometimes goes along with acceptance of inferiority. Yet it is really we oldsters who have wrought the changes which now weigh us down. I have heard an authentic automobile pioneer complain that too much money is being spent on the good roads which he and his successors made necessary. Our nation strives greatly, builds tremendously, and the result is seldom what's expected. Some of my editorials of long ago still make sense, but many more make nonsense when read today. From the platform of University Hall we students heard famous statesmen proclaim as truths propositions that now appear patently absurd. And I suspect that many a college professor of my salad days would be willing to confess that the tablets of the old learning have been overthrown and that he, like the rest of us, merely did the best we could with what we had. As Sam Patch said, just before he made his last fatal leap into Genesee Falls, "Some things can be done as well as others." But neither Sam nor any of us can keep on the jump forever or be quite sure that the seeds we plant will bloom according to calculations. So I say, let's turn the future over gracefully to the youngsters - it's theirs any way - and may they have as much fun kicking it around as we did in the long ago!

May 26, 1953
Ann Arbor, Michigan

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MORE SMILES
from the 1881 History of Washtenaw Co.

"Mr. E. was very ambitious, worked early and late, stored his mind with useful knowledge, and thereby rapidly acquired a fortune."

"They have one child, 11 years old, possessing mechanical qualities which in the future will make him a man of wealth and prominence."

"He was reared on a farm and obtained only a limited education, but since he became of age he has acquired an extended knowledge of the greater part of the arts and sciences."

"He began life with his own brains and muscle and now owns 100 acres of fine land."

"Rev. J. was zealous and laborious, but eccentric, walking through the forests."

"He attended high school in Ann Arbor where he gained what education he possesses."